

1 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Advisory Group

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Operations
Deputy Director for Administration

FROM : Charles A. Briggs, DDO Information Review Officer
Harold G. Bean, DDA Assistant for Information

SUBJECT : Need for an Agency-Level Central Mechanism
for Policy Review and Release of Potentially
Controversial and Publicity Generating
Information

Issue: To a growing degree, newsmen, scholars and others, including particularly the Center for National Security Studies, are better organized than the Agency to collate and analyze information released from a multiplicity of Agency release points. A central policy overview is required to assess the total Agency impact of information release, and to insure consistency and continuity in our approach to release of information.

Discussion:

1. External pressures for intelligence information release have increased dramatically, and have resulted in a flow external to the Intelligence Community unparalleled in the first 27 or 28 years of the Agency's existence. The Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts, mandatory declassification requests under E.O. 11652, Congressional and Department of Justice investigations, individual and class action civil suits--these, and more, have been the vehicles.

2. Within the Agency, there are at least 15 identifiable points of release of information to the outside. Coordination with involved components usually does occur but generally not in accord with a common standard, except in the case of FOIA/PA and E.O. 11652 requests. And then, standards for sanitizing differ, depending on whether the information is sought in response to civil or criminal litigation, FOIA initial requests or whatever. Standards for handling names of personnel and organizations differ within the Agency. A new handbook soon will introduce standards in the FOIA/PA world; nevertheless, cover will

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continue to pose particular problems to the DDO, and others whose activities support or co-exist with DDO activities must share a common understanding of potential problems for liaison services as well as agents that can result from official releases of information which tend to identify station locations or activities overseas.

3. We have as yet no comprehensive index to a retrievable collection of documents already released in sanitized form so that we can know what we have already done, should the same documents come for release review in another request or another context. The Center for National Security Studies knows: many individuals, detractors, newsmen and others, pool their receipts from FOIA and Privacy Act requests. (They have acknowledged doing so to us in their appeals in which they allege that there seems to be different treatment for different requesters). Much substantive information released is also available, commercially, from the Carrollton Press. There are many examples of what appears to the outsider to be confusion, absence of sophistication or professionalism--or what could be misinterpreted as arbitrary and capricious actions contrary to the law.

Conclusion: Some centralized overview, to assess the total Agency impact of release of potentially sensitive or controversial information is required to protect sources and methods as well as to project a credible professional image. There are several organizational options, including expansion of the IRC role; establishment of a fairly large centralized office as the funnel for all releases as was approved for mandatory declassification review; expansion of the function of the Assistant to the DCI or of the OGC or IG. The option which seems least costly, least disruptive, while organizationally located in the right spot for policy awareness seems to be that of adding a senior DDO and a DDA officer with clerical support, to the O/DDCI. Their activity should be backstopped by a computer supported index (or indexes), with input from the directorates, OLC, OGC et al, in accord with their needs to support their own systems. Certain common standards could evolve, aiming at a single system to the degree feasible; the DDO system will operate on ODP computers with an IBM standard program and could serve as an Agency system if input were decentralized.

Coordination: The principle of centralized policy review and of an index of released documents as described, has

drawn favorable response from OGC, IRC Secretariat, OLC, IG, O/Comptroller, and O/DDCI representatives, and the recent Assistant to the DCI, Mr. Falkiewicz.

Recommendations:

- a. That the Office of the DDCI be expanded to include the policy review of flap-potential information releases described above.
- b. That two professionals, senior DDO and DDA officers (the former ranking because of the particular problems of the DDO), be detailed to the O/DDCI to undertake this expanded function, with appropriate clerical support. *Two officers to do all this retrospective searching??*
- c. That the ODP-supported DDO index to its released documents be considered a service of common concern and a model for an eventual single Agency system, to the degree feasible, with non-DDO input preparation by the using components.
- d. That systems which for defendable reasons cannot evolve into a single system meet retrieval standards consistent with the need for the O/DDCI to provide comprehensive and timely overview.

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MARY McGRORY

Terminating the CIA

Pat Moynihan has a candidate he is pushing for Bill Clinton's consideration for CIA director: Nobody.

The Democratic senator from New York hinted at his choice in a report he sent to the president-elect about Bosnia, which he visited over Thanksgiving. Yugoslavia is another former country that Moynihan thinks the agency misread—by completely missing the ethnic ferocity that is causing slaughter and famine.

He wants the agency shut down and its functions folded into the State Department, not just because it was a creation of the Cold War that has outlived what little usefulness he thinks it had. It is because on the central question of the Cold War era, the spooks got it dead wrong and caused us to misspend ourselves into bankruptcy competing with a pauper nation.

Moynihan may have a better chance of convincing Bill Clinton to trim CIA and stuff it into State than he has of convincing his colleagues in the Senate. His recent attempt to give a semblance of democracy to the secrets factory—he wanted to publish its budget—lost badly. Democrats have not yet cast out their fear of seeming “soft” on national security; and Republicans, who hate all government with a great passion, become passionately protective when cloak and dagger are in danger. Clinton, at least, is anxious to save money. “He could get about \$5 billion if he closed it down,” says Moynihan, “and not a drop of blood on the floor.”

Some senators, notably the current chairman of the intelligence committee, are starry-eyed about “The Company.” David L. Boren (D-Okla.) earnestly believes that the CIA is serious about “reform.” He lobbied vigorously for the confirmation of the present director, Robert M. Gates, from an almost childlike conviction that Gates wished to democratize the agency and would confide in his so-called overseers in Congress. “I know,” Boren would say to doubters, “because he has told us so much, even things he didn’t have to tell us.”

Recently, Boren has undergone a conversion. Gates failed to share his information about the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, the state-owned Italian giant and its little Atlanta branch, that provided the funds for loans to Iraq, and the burgeoning scandal about our generous financing of Saddam Hussein’s war machine. As it happened, the CIA

got it right about what was going on in Rome, but when challenged by the Justice Department, which is prosecuting on different theory, it obligingly revised its information and did not tell all it knew to a federal judge. Boren has now joined in the hue and cry for an independent counsel.

But Moynihan does not discuss such transgressions when he presses his idea of eliminating “with extreme prejudice”—CIA’s phrase for offing someone who thwarts its purpose. He does not recite the catalogue of crimes committed by the agency when it was being identified in the late Sen. Frank Church’s 1976 exposé as “a rogue elephant.” The forbidden domestic spying during Watergate, the infamous LSD experiments on unwitting subjects, the subversion of the Chilean government, the assassinations, to some Americans hardly reflect our values.

Moynihan, the most scholarly senator, is a social scientist, and he knows about taking the measurements that the agency got so wrong for so long. In 1979, without the aid of satellites or any other sophisticated intelligence-gathering equipment, he figured out that the Soviet Union was headed for extinction.

He credits a “modest” employee of the Census Bureau, one Murray Feshbach, who in a forest of statistics found the tree that mattered: the life expectancy for Soviet males was dropping. This should not be happening in a country whose growth rate was routinely cited by CIA as on a par with that of Italy and Japan. In one of their most egregious bloopers, they figured that the per capita income in East Germany was higher than West Germany’s.

“The agency was so wedded to the notion of the Soviet Union as a successful state, that they couldn’t absorb other ideas or realities,” Moynihan says.

Stansfield Turner, Jimmy Carter’s CIA director, has admitted the hugely wrong estimates; but Gates and the others now in charge are incapable of saying “Boy, did we ever get it wrong.” Moynihan notes “revisionist rumblings” from Langley to the effect that they had it right all along. It has to have been their best-kept secret.

Why does Congress put up with such ruinously expensive incompetence and, year after year, increase the CIA’s secret budget?

Moynihan sighs. “It’s the cachet of knowing things that other people don’t know—even when they’re wrong.”

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